اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer

Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 97 Al-Qadr

سُوْرَةُ الْقَدْرِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ١

(97-1) Behold, We revealed this (Quran) on the Night of Power. (1)

(1) The words in the original are anzalana hu: We sent it down. But although there is no mention of the Quran before it, the Quran is implied, for sending down by itself points out that the Quran is meant. And there are numerous instances of this in the Quran that if from the context, or the style, the antecedent of a pronoun is apparent, the pronoun is used even if the antecedent has not been mentioned anywhere before or after it. (For explanation, see(E.N. 9 of Surah An-Najm).

Here, it has been said: We sent it down (the Quran) in the Night of Destiny, and in (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 185), Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was sent down. This shows that the night in which the Angel of God had brought down revelation for the first time to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Cave of Hira, was a night of the month of Ramadan. This night has been described as Lailat-ul-qadr here and as Lailat-im-mubarakah in (Surah Ad-Dukhan,Ayat 3).

There can be two meanings of sending down the Quran in this night: First, that in this night the entire Quran was entrusted to the bearers (angels) of revelation, and then Gabriel continued to reveal its verses and Surahs, from time to time, to the Prophet (peace be upon him) during 23 years as the occasion and conditions demanded. This meaning has been given by Ibn Abbas. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn al- Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah, Baihaqi). Second, that the revelation of the Quran began in this night. This is Imam Shabi’s view, although from him

too the other view is also related, which is the view of Ibn Abbas as cited above (Ibn Jarir). Anyhow, in both cases, the meaning is the same that the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) began in this very night, and this was the night in which the five opening verses of (Surah Al-Alaq) were revealed. The fact, however, is that Allah did not compose the verses and the Surahs of the Quran right at the time guidance was needed by the Prophet (Peace be upon him) for his message of Islam in respect of an occasion or affair, but even before the creation of the universe, in the very beginning, Allah had a full plan of the creation of mankind on the earth, of raising the Prophets in it, of sending down the Books to the Prophets, of raising the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) at the end of the line of the Prophets and of sending down the Quran to him. In the Night of Destiny only the execution of the final phase of the plan began. No wonder if at that very time the entire Quran was entrusted to the bearers of revelation.

Some commentators have interpreted qadr to mean destiny (taqdir), i.e. it is the night in which Allah entrusts the decrees of destiny to the angels to be enforced. This is supported by (Verse 3 of Surah Ad-Dukhan): This is a night in which every matter is decided wisely by Our command. On the contrary, Imam Zuhri says that qadr means glory and honor, there by implying that it is a Night of Destiny. This meaning is supported by the words Lailat-ul-qadr is better than a thousand months of this Surah itself.

As for the question as to which night it was, it is disputed and there are as many as 40 different views on this subject. However, a great majority of scholars hold the opinion that one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan is Lailat-ul-qadr, and among these also most scholars think that it is the 27th night. Below we give the authentic Ahadith which have been reported in this connection:

According to Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, in connection with Lailat-ul qadr, that it is the 27th night. (Abu Daud Tayalisi). According to another tradition from Abu Hurairah, it is the last night of Ramadan. (Musnad Ahmad).

When Zirr bin Hubaish asked Ubayy bin Kaab about Lailat-ul-qadr, he stated on oath, and did not make any exception, that it is the 27th night. (Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Da'ud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Hibban). When Abu Zarr was asked about it, he said: Umar, Hudhaifah and many other companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) had no doubt that it is the 27th night. (Ibn Abi Shaibah). Ubadah bin as-Samit says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Lailat-al-qadr is one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan: 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th, or the last night. (Musnad Ahmad).

Abdullah bin Abbas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Search for it among the last ten nights of Ramadan when there are still nine days in the month, or seven days, or five days. (Bukhari). Most of the scholars have understood it to mean that by this the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant the odd nights. Abu Bakr said: When nine days remain in the month, or seven days, or five days, or three days, or the last night. What he meant was that Lailat-ul-qadr should be sought among these days. (Tirmidhi, Nasai).

According to Aishah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Search for Lailat-ul-qadr among the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan. (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad, Tirmidhi). Aishah and Abdullah bin Umar have also reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed itikaf (seclusion in the Mosque) during the last ten nights of Ramadan every year during his lifetime.

On the basis of the traditions related in this regard on the authority of a great companions like Muawiyah, lbn Umar, Ibn Abbas and others, a large number of the earlier scholars regard the 27th of Ramadan as Lailat-ul-qadr. Probably Allah and His Messenger have not specified any one night for the reason so that the people, in their zeal to benefit from the virtues of Lailat-ul-qadr, should spend more and more nights in worship and devotion and should not remain content with only one night. Here the question arises that when it is night at Makkah, it is daytime in a large part of the world; therefore, the people of those parts can never take advantage of Lailat-ul-qadr. The answer is that the

word night in Arabic is mostly used for the combination of the day and night. Therefore, the night preceding the day on any one of these dates of Ramadan can be Lailat ul-qadr for that part of the world.

وَ مَاۤ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۟ۙ﴿۲﴾

(97-2) And what do you know what the Night of Power is?

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۙ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ اَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿۳﴾

(97-3) The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. (2)

(2) The commentators in general have understood this to mean that the good acts performed in this night are superior in value to the good acts of a thousand months in which Lailat-ul-qadr is not included. There is no doubt that this is in itself correct and the Prophet (peace be upon him) has described great excellences and virtues of the good acts and devotions of this night. According to a tradition related in Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The one who remained standing in worship in the state of belief and for the sake of rewards from Allah during Lailat-ul-qadr, would have all his previous sins forgiven. And in Musnad Ahmad, there is a tradition from Ubadah bin as-Samit, saying that the Prophet said: Lailat-ut-qadr is among the last ten nights of Ramadan. The one who stood up in worship in order to take advantage of their rewards, Allah will forgive all his former and latter sins. But, the verse does not say: To act righteously in Lailat-ul-qadr is better than acting righteously in a thousand months, but it says: Lailat-ul-qadr is better than a thousand months. And a thousand months also does not imply 83 years and 4 months exactly, but a very long period of time as a thousand denoted among the Arabs. Therefore, the verse means that in this one night a task was accomplished for the welfare of mankind the

like of which had not been accomplished even during an indefinitely long period of history.

تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَ الرُّوْحُ فِيْهَا بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ مِنْ كُلِّ اَمْرٍ ۙ﴿۴﴾

(97-4) The angels along with the Spirit [3] descend in it by the permission of their Lord [4] with all kinds of decrees.

(3) The Spirit: Gabriel, who has been mentioned separately from the angels in view of his unique eminence, honor and merit.

(4) That is, they do not descend of their own accord but by leave of their Lord, and every decree implies amr hakim (a wise decree) as described in (Surah Ad-Dukhan, Ayat 5).

سَلٰمٌ ۛ هِيَ حَتّٰى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ۩﴿۵﴾

(97-5) All peace is that night until the rise of dawn. [5]

(5) That is, the entire night, from evening till morning, is peace, free from every evil and mischief.